

**For Immediate Release  
October 15, 2004**

**Contact: K. Danielle Edwards  
(615) 532-8826 (office)  
(615) 417-9097 (cell)**

### **Taft Youth Development Center Football Team Kicks Off Davidson Academy Homecoming**

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** - The Taft Tigers football team from Taft Youth Development Center in Bledsoe County will be traveling to Nashville to play against Davidson Academy's varsity squad on Fri., Oct. 15, for the school's homecoming game. The friendly competition is an eagerly anticipated showdown for the 22-member Taft team. "It's the first time they've ever been on a team of any kind," says coach Robert "Rooster" Worthington. Beyond the common goal of winning, Worthington believes that being on a team also helps to foster a long-term sense of community and unity. "(Previously) it's always been about 'me' and 'I.' It's never been about teamwork," he says.

"The discipline that they have to have and working as a team are big factors. So it's about having someone put faith in them that they can do the job," adds Carol Muscanero, public information officer for Taft. The football program at Taft, which began competing with other high school teams in 1970, prioritizes exposing its players to an authentic high school game experience. "We're five years behind when we walk onto the field. Most teams, they've been playing seven or eight years when they walk onto a field. Most of them have played little league, but never any high school competition, so this is a whole new world to them," explains Worthington.

Vanderbilt University's pep band has reached out to add their flavor to the experience. Jonathan Wiley, a pep band member, asked if his 30-member crew could sit on and cheer for Taft's side, according to Muscanero. "It's going to be like an actual football game for them," she says. "This is a really positive program for them."

The football game will be held at 7:30pm at Davidson Academy, located at 1414 Old Hickory Blvd.

A banquet will be held for the Taft Tigers on Oct. 27 at Fall Creek Falls State Park. A donation from businessmen Ed and Tim Martin of Martin Crating in McMinnville helped make the event possible. University of Tennessee football players Britton and Dustin Colquitt are scheduled to speak at the banquet.

Taft Youth Development Center, near Pikeville, serves 156 male students, ages 16-19, from across the state.

For more information, please contact  
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